

the Schools to Watch by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform.

The School to Watch program was launched in 1999 to identify high-performing middle schools that serve as a model for other schools to watch across the Nation. These schools, like Canyon Middle School, demonstrate academic excellence, develop programs that respond to the sensitive needs of early adolescence, and provide students with high-quality teachers and resources to support students in their academic goals.

This week, at the Ninth Annual Schools to Watch Conference, Canyon Middle School will be presented with this prestigious award. Canyon Middle School will be represented by attendance clerk Adria Anderson-Kelly, Assistant Principal Juan Flores, Assistant Principal Annie Flores-Aikey, math and science teacher Gregory Matawaran, math and science teacher Liz Oettel, and special education teacher Cheryll Rosales.

I look forward to congratulating the group from Canyon Middle School this Thursday when they visit my office, and I look forward to hearing more details about how more schools can follow their example of excellence.

Congratulations again to the teachers, administrators, parents, and students that helped Canyon Middle School achieve this award. You make me and your congressional district very proud.

□ 1210

IN MEMORY OF STEVE LAFRANCE

(Mr. COTTON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COTTON. Today, I honor the memory of my constituent Steve LaFrance who passed away earlier this month. Steve was a pillar of the Pine Bluff community, and really all of Arkansas.

A pharmacist by training, he started his business in 1968 with a single pharmacy in Gibson's Department Store in Pine Bluff. From that modest start, Steve built USA Drug over 44 years into the largest privately owned chain of drugstores in the country.

Steve's motto, like my own dad's, was "do the right thing." It was the foundation of his success. All who knew him and all who worked with Steve, whether employees, customers, vendors, and even competitors, respected not only his business acumen, but especially his sense of fair play, passion, and loyalty.

Even more than a businessman, though, Steve was a devoted family man, proud father of four children, seven grandkids, and the loving husband of Linda, his wife of 44 years. He was also a deeply faithful Christian man who walked in the path of the Lord and now walks with Him.

On behalf of all Arkansans and the United States Congress, I wish to express my deepest condolences to him.

Like you, we all miss "Big Steve," and we were all enriched by having our lives touched by him.

PROTECTING THE BALLOT BOX FROM DISCRIMINATION

(Mr. BARROW of Georgia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BARROW of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express my disappointment in the Supreme Court's decision striking down the preclearance provisions of the Voting Rights Act.

Mr. Speaker, making sure that our election laws are fair is the most important job in a democracy because the right to vote is the right on which everything else depends. Countless Americans have marched for it, suffered for it, and shed their blood for it.

In Georgia, one of the greatest proponents of the Voting Rights Act, our colleague, Congressman JOHN LEWIS, knows all too well the price that's been paid to make sure that election laws are not only open but fair to all concerned.

We can't go back to the days when majorities can pass laws that limit or diminish the voting strength of minorities. I'm calling on my colleagues in Congress, Republicans and Democrats, not to let this issue die. We need to do what is right and ensure, once and for all, that folks aren't discriminated against at the ballot box.

SECURING OUR FUTURE

(Ms. FOXX asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. FOXX. Mr. Speaker, House Republicans have a plan to create jobs, grow our economy, and secure our future for all Americans. And we're doing it by expanding opportunity, not expanding government.

We're holding government accountable to the hardworking taxpayers of this country.

We're reining in runaway Washington spending that's driving up our national debt.

We're going to reform our Tax Code to make it fairer and simpler for all Americans.

We are promoting an all-of-the-above, all-American energy strategy that will create jobs, lower energy costs, and strengthen our national security.

These are the commonsense solutions that the American people deserve, Mr. Speaker. It's not fair that Washington Democrats keep offering up only more spending and political games. Real solutions to real problems, that's the House Republican commitment.

STUDENT LOANS

(Ms. KELLY of Illinois asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. KELLY of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today on behalf of 7 million students with subsidized student loans to

urge my colleagues in Congress to come together to prevent student loan rates from doubling on July 1.

The cost of a college degree has increased by more than 1,000 percent in the last 30 years. Two-thirds of college seniors who graduated in 2011 had an average student loan debt of \$26,000 per borrower. As the July 1 deadline approaches, America's total student loan debt already tops \$1.1 trillion.

We're a nation that invests in our future, and that means investing in our kids. Mounting student debt is handicapping a generation of graduates who already face a tough job market. This debt is forcing them to put off key milestones like buying a home and starting a family. This delay in the American Dream will diminish our Nation's economic development.

Congress has come to the aid of our banks and worked to promote industry. Now it's time to step up for our students by preserving college affordability and keeping the American Dream within reach.

Let's stand together to keep Federal student loan rates down. I urge my colleagues to act now.

THE WAR ON COAL

(Mrs. BLACKBURN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. Speaker, I come to the floor to share a quote with my colleagues to make them aware of this. It is from Daniel Schrag. He is the White House adviser on climate change, and this was reported in The New York Times. Quite frankly, I find this quote baffling. Here it is:

The one thing the President really needs to do now is to begin the process of shutting down the conventional coal plants. Politically, the White House is hesitant to say that we're having a war on coal. On the other hand, a war on coal is exactly what's needed.

That was Mr. Schrag, the White House adviser on climate change.

Mr. Speaker, I highlight this with my colleagues in this House right now because a war on coal is a war on jobs; a war on jobs, is a war on the American worker.

I have never met anybody that wants to pay more for electric power generation, but the actions of this administration, the actions of the President choosing to circumvent Congress and implement these is costing us 500,000 jobs.

PTSD AWARENESS DAY

(Ms. GABBARD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. GABBARD. Mr. Speaker, I'm rising today to recognize Posttraumatic Stress Awareness Day and so that we can honor our men and women in uniform who have so bravely served our

Nation. For them, when they come home, the battle doesn't end, which is why we must ensure that they're well served as they go through the transition from combat to civilian life.

Research has shown that an estimated 18.5 percent, or nearly one in five of our courageous veterans, suffer from PTSD or depression. This number is likely artificially low because of a reluctance to report these conditions. Further, PTSD and other mental conditions can often lead to other serious psychological and physical health conditions.

In Congress, we must ensure that we work with the Department of Veterans Affairs to address these issues as they face our veterans coming home. We owe it to them, these selfless, servant leaders, to empower them so that they can be provided the seamless transition they need and empower them to continue their service to our communities here at home.

THE WAR ON COAL

(Mr. CRAMER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. CRAMER. Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago, our President announced his intention to unilaterally disarm our national defense by cutting back our nuclear deterrent. This week, he announced his intention to unilaterally disarm our entire economy by declaring war on coal.

In my State of North Dakota, the coal industry employs over 17,000 highly paid workers that provide the lowest cost electricity to our retail customers anywhere in the country. They contribute \$3.5 billion to our State's economy.

And in case the President thinks that we need his EPA to keep our air clean, he should know that North Dakota meets all ambient air quality standards as prescribed by the EPA.

And I will not sit idly by and watch this President steal the jobs, hopes, and dreams of my constituents, nor will I sit idly by while he and his EPA impose their mediocrity on my State's excellent stewardship of our natural resources.

North Dakota will not retreat from this war waged on us by our President. We must and we will fight back.

DALIP SINGH SAUND

(Mr. BERA of California asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BERA of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the contributions of Dalip Singh Saund, the first Indian American and the first Asian American to be elected to Congress.

Along with 13 of my colleagues from California, I recently sent a letter asking Governor Jerry Brown to induct him into California's Hall of Fame.

Saund was born in a small village in India, and much like my own parents,

he immigrated to the United States in 1920 to attend college in California. He went on to serve his adopted country for three terms in Congress and was a trailblazer for human and civil rights.

Congressman Saund's outstanding achievements and public service are an inspiration to generations of Asian Americans, Californians, and to all Americans.

His portrait now hangs right outside this Chamber as a reminder to us all of the values that he stood for, values of equality and opportunity. Now it's time that Congressman Dalip Singh Saund's contributions are recognized in his home State by enshrining him in California's Hall of Fame.

□ 1220

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

(Mr. HIMES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. HIMES. Mr. Speaker, this morning in striking down the discriminatory Defense of Marriage Act, the Supreme Court stood for an idea that permeates this institution: that regardless of who you are, the color of your skin, or whom you choose to love, the United States will not discriminate against you.

Unfortunately, yesterday the Supreme Court went in exactly the wrong direction on an even more fundamental issue: that those of us who serve here, our laws, our President, our Members of Congress, are elected by the people of the United States in a truly equal fashion.

We acknowledge that progress has been made in those regions that historically discriminated against minorities, but we also acknowledge that the problem is still there. Justice Ginsburg's dissenting opinion has example after example of discrimination. For example, in 2004, Waller County, Texas, threatened to prosecute two black students after they announced their intention to run for office.

Mr. Speaker, business should cease on this floor until we take up the Supreme Court's challenge to modernize and reinstitute the heart of the Voting Rights Act so that we can all look each other in the eye and say, We are here because the American people, all of them, elected us.

DEEPER AND BIGGER HOLE OF DEBT

(Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CAROLYN B. MALONEY of New York. Mr. Speaker, in just 4 days, millions of American students will quite suddenly finally find themselves between a rock and a hard place. Unless Congress acts, the interest rates on subsidized student loans will double on July 1. This increase comes on top of sharp rises in public college tuition,

and together means students hoping to improve their economic chances in life have to borrow more money at higher cost to get an increasingly more expensive college education.

A new report by the Joint Economic Committee, on which I serve as the ranking Democrat on the House side, shows that two-thirds of our recent graduates now have student loan debt with an average balance of \$27,000. For someone just starting out in life, that is a mountain of debt and averages about 60 percent of their annual earnings. That means that two-thirds of our college graduates today are starting out in a pretty deep, big hole.

The question for Congress is: Are we going to just sit back and let them get into a deeper and bigger hole of debt?

Let's fix the student loan problem and get America moving again.

VOTING RIGHTS ACT

(Mr. RANGEL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker, it took the Supreme Court to remind us that when our young people put their bodies in harm's way, or even offer their lives for this great country, that notwithstanding their background, they don't do it for their color, for their race, for their family and community alone; they do it for these great United States. People who have never met each other but do feel that under our Constitution we are all brought together to respect each other's rights, and we have an outline for that belief that is called our Constitution.

It seems to me that yesterday the Supreme Court said that we are making progress in making certain that all Americans have the right to vote and that Negroes, as they were called in 1965, have made great progress. But that was not what Lyndon Johnson said when he was advocating the 1965 Civil Rights Act. He said that no impediment should be put in the way of any person being denied the right to vote because of their race or color. I hope the Supreme Court will review this ruling.

STANDING UP FOR WOMEN'S REPRODUCTIVE CHOICES

(Mr. VEASEY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. VEASEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to thank Texas State Senator Wendy Davis from my home town of Fort Worth, Texas, for leading a marathon filibuster in standing up for women and women's rights. For too long, we have seen the health care choices of women taken over by male politicians who are more concerned